

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

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TAGS: PFOR, MO

SUBJ: AMB. SCHAUFELLE'S TALK WITH BOUABID

REF: RABAT 4819

FROM AMB SCHAUFELLE

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION BOUABID MADE FOLLOWING
COMMENTS ON MOROCCAN INTERNAL SITUATION:

(A) DESPITE NUMEROUS DISCUSSIONS BEN SEDDIK WOULD NOT
ACCEPT CHANGES IN EXISTING UNFP ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
ALTHOUGH HE NEVER EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY. THEREFORE BOUABID
GROUP DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH CHANGE FROM UNFP TO USFP.

(B) NEVERTHELESS HE ANTICIPATES NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES
IN GENERAL POLITICAL PROGRAM AND AIMS AMONG USFP, UNFP
AND UMT BUT WAS MUCH MORE VAGUE ON POSSIBILITY OF TACTICAL
COORDINATION. ADMITTED THAT BEN SEDDIK'S INTERESTS ARE,
AS USUAL, BASED ON HIS PERCEPTION OF HIS AND UMT'S INTERESTS
AND NOT ON THOSE OF POLITICAL GROUPING WITH WHICH HE ASSO-
CIATED. NOTED, IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, THAT BEN SEDDIK
CAREFULLY MAINTAINS AND REINFORCES HIS OWN CHANNELS
OF COMMUNICATION TO PALACE.

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(C) THERE IS NOTHING TO PRECLUDE CONTINUED ISTIQLAL/UNFP (USFP) NATIONAL FRONT AT LEAST UNTIL ELECTION CAMPAIGN OPENS.

(D) IN FACT COLLABORATION WILL BE IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF PROJECTED ELECTION. TIME FRAME FOR ELECTIONS IS PERFECTLY REASONABLE BUT THERE WILL HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATIONS WITH PALACE TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. THERE WILL BE MUCH GREATER CHANCE OF SUCCESS IN THIS REGARD IF FRONT HANGS TOGETHER, ESPECIALLY SINCE PALACE WILL PROBABLY TRY TO PLAY OFF PARTIES AGAINST EACH OTHER AS USUAL.

(E) PROPOSAL THAT POLITICAL LEADERS PARTICIPATE AS MINISTERS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IS ACCEPTABLE IF IT UNDERSTOOD THAT (1) SUCH PARTICIPATION IS FOR THE ELECTIONS AND NOT TO GIVE IMPRESSION THAT IT IMPLIES SUPPORT OF PALACE POLICIES AND (2) NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR ELECTIONS AGREED TO. SUCH PARTICIPATION COULD ALSO HELP PREVENT OR - MORE PROBABLY - LIMIT PALACE MACHINATIONS TO RIG ELECTIONS.

(F) IF HASSAN WERE SATISFIED SIMPLY TO BE MONARCH THERE WOULD BE NO PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING PRESENT STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT. BY IMPLICATION, THEREFORE, IF HE INSISTS ON RULING AS WELL, HIS FUTURE COULD BE IN JEOPARDY.

(G) POLITICALLY INTERESTED YOUTH HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY DRIVEN INTO CLANDESTINITY AND OPPOSITION, MAKING THEM MORE AND MORE UNCONTROLLABLE EVEN FOR MOROCCAN LEFT. THIS CARRIES GRAVE IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE.

(H) IN ABSENCE PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION TO MODIFY EXISTING STRUCTURE MILITARY WOULD BE OBVIOUS SOURCE OF CHANGE. HOWEVER THERE IS DEEP DIVISION WITHIN MILITARY WHICH PROBABLY WOULD NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH POWER IF IT HAD IT.

2. PERHAPS REFLECTING HIS INVOLVEMENT IN CURRENT MOROCCAN ACTIVITY ON SPANISH SAHARA ISSUE, BOUABID WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF ALGERIA AND ITS ASPIRATIONS. HE SAID ALGERIA CANNOT BE TRUSTED AND ITSELF SEEKS CONTROL OF SPANISH
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SAHARA AND ITS PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS. NOTED THAT ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN BORDER AGREEMENT HAD NEVER BEEN RATIFIED AND WOULD NOT BE IF IT WERE UP TO A MOROCCAN LEGISLATURE. OBVIOUSLY BOUABID USED BOGIE OF ALGERIAN THREAT TO PLEAD FOR US SUPPORT. HOWEVER, HE CLAIMED THAT MOROCCAN LEFT, IF IT CAME TO POWER, WOULD HAVE SERIOUS DIFFICULTY WORKING TOGETHER WITH ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BOUABID SOUNDED OPTIMISTIC ABOUT DEGREE OF COMMON GROUND WHICH UNFP AND USFP COULD ESTABLISH, HE DID NOT MAKE VERY CONVINCING ARGUMENT. IT SOUNDS VERY MUCH LIKE A REPLAY OF PAST HISTORY. LEFTIST OPPOSITION CANNOT FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT ACTIVE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION OF UMT WHICH STARTS TO PUT DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND POLITICAL PARTY AS SOON AS LATTER SHOWS SIGNS OF TAKING POSITIONS OR INITIATING ACTION WHICH BEN SEDDIK BELIEVES COULD COMPROMISE UMT INDEPENDENCE OR FREEDOM OF ACTION.

4. ADMITTEDLY ONE WOULD NEED MORE THAN THIS LUNCHEON AND OTHER RELATIVELY BRIEF CONTACTS WITH BOUABID HERE TO MAKE MEANINGFUL JUDGMENT ON HIS PRESENT STATE OF MIND. WITH THAT CAVEAT IN MIND I FIND HIM LESS MILITANT, LESS DECISIVE, MORE CONSERVATIVE AND MORE WILLING TO SEEK ACCOMMODATION WITH PALACE THAN THE BOUABID I KNEW A DOZEN YEARS AGO. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH AND OPINIONS OF BEN SEDDIK HAVE NOT CHANGED ONE BIT - THEY SIMPLY DO NOT GET ALONG. HOWEVER HE CAREFULLY REFRAINED FROM CRITICISM OF ABDULLAH IBRAHIM.
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